

# CONVENTION CITY OF 1908.



NOWHERE in the United States is there a city of the same size that possesses such a wealth of historic interest and is so adapted for conventions as is the city of Richmond. Situated in the center of the most historic portion of the United States, within a short distance of all the ancient towns of the Colony, fifty miles from Jamestown, the first English settlement in America, the ancient seat of art, literature and learning of the early days, and the very heart of the struggle between the States, there is perhaps no other city that appeals so strongly to the people of America and to visitors from abroad as does the capital of the Confederacy for four long years, and in a united country the capital of Virginia to-day. Richmond is almost as old a settlement as is the historic island of Jamestown, on James River, for but two years after Captain John Smith and his band of adventurous gentlemen landed on American soil in 1607, an exploration under Wise was sent out from Jamestown to find the source of the river which had been named in honor of the King. Sailing up the stream, the band reached the head of navigation, and were forced to come to anchor on account of the immense boulders that spread across the river. They landed in 1609 at a point where Richmond now stands. This may be called the first settlement of the city, although it was not until the following year that 100 men came from Jamestown and went into camp at the falls of James River. From Powhatan, the Indian King, whose daughter, Pocahontas, played so important a part in the history of the Colony, and who later married John Rolfe, went aboard and died there, was purchased a strip of territory where Richmond now stands, upon which a fortification was erected. In 1611 Sir Thomas Drake took possession of the place, and, in honor of Prince Henry, named the village Henricopolis, which is to-day the name of the county, and from which the city of Richmond may fairly be said to have sprung. So it will be seen that Richmond is almost as old as the first settlement itself, founded by the same people and fostered under the same laws.

**Stormy Days.**  
These early days were days of adventure and of sudden death for the men who manned the small fort, and the streets of Henricopolis, which became that of William Byrd, who is known to history as the founder of Richmond, was granted all the territory around Henricopolis, on condition that he would keep at the village fifty strong and stalwart men to protect the settlers and overpower the warlike but friendly Indians. It was in Richmond that Nathaniel Bacon lived, and to-day a stone on the lawn of a small villa on Grove Road marks the place of his residence here. The town slowly grew apace, but it was not until 1742, when George II. declared that he incorporated the city, that the name of Richmond, in honor of the aristocratic resort made famous by white bait on the banks of the Thames, William Byrd himself owned an estate near Richmond; in fact, the property was in the heart of what is known as Richmond to-day, and the street called Belvidere, which runs through the most fashionable part of the city, was named after his residence, which occupied a commanding position on the hills that overlook the falls, and which in the literature of the day was described as magnificent and lovely. Richmond grew but slowly for Williamsburg, which had become the capital of the Colony after the burning of Jamestown, was the great social center of the State, and the rich planters and their wives and daughters gathered there to take part in the social affairs that surrounded the Governor's court, to visit the play and witness the horse-races and sports which there abounded. In 1776, however, during the Revolutionary War, on account of the threatened invasion by the British, the capital was moved from Williamsburg to Richmond, which thereafter became the social center of the Old Dominion. In 1782 Richmond was incorporated as a city, and from that time on the growth has been very steady and well abreast with the times.

**Points of Interest.**  
A spot of interest around Richmond in point of antiquity as well as in point of historic value is St. John's Church, which building standing on a hill which takes its name from that edifice, is perhaps the most famous church in the whole of America. The Parish of St. John's dates back to as early a period as 1682, when a church of some sort was erected, but not until 1710 was the

present house of worship built, the colonists being ordered to raise the necessary sum, and those failing to contribute being assessed under the law and those amounts collected by execution. It was in this edifice in 1776 that Patrick Henry delivered his great speech, "Give me liberty or give me death," which has come ringing down through the years ever since. Surrounding the old church is an equally interesting burying ground, in which many distinguished dead are buried, and which, on account of the quaintness of the inscriptions, resembles the graveyards of the old English churches.

In 1788 the foundation of the present State Capitol was begun. This building was planned and erected by Thomas Jefferson, who modeled it after the famous Maison Carree of Nîmes, built by Calvus and Lucius Caesar; and it is recorded that Mr. Jefferson pronounced the building the most beautiful and most perfectly proportioned of any he had ever seen.

**Religious Liberty.**  
This building has played its part in the history of America. In the early days the voices of the great men in America were heard within its walls. Religious liberty was born here, not only in theory, but in practice, for the committee of churchmen which framed the bill sat there, and the officials of Virginia opened wide its doors as the meeting place for the people of various religious denominations. It is recorded that Sunday after Sunday religious services were held in the hall of the General Assembly, the Rev. Mr. Buchanan, an Episcopal clergyman, preaching one Sunday anderson Blair, an eminent Presbyterian divine, whose grandfather had been one of the distinguished clergymen of the earlier days, preaching the next, and wonderful to relate, to the self-same congregation. But not alone did the Episcopalians and Presbyterians worship here, for it is worthy of note that at the express request of the General Assembly a very distinguished French abbe said mass in the State Capitol shortly after the Revolution, this being the first time that mass had been said in any large building within the confines of the Confederacy best known, however, for here the Confederate Congress sat, and in the building were the offices of President Jefferson Davis.

**Hendon Statue.**  
The State Capitol, which has lately been enlarged and improved, without, however, departing from the lines laid down by Mr. Jefferson, is situated in

the center of a beautiful wooded park, in which there are numerous statues erected to the memory of the great and loyal sons of Virginia, none of which, however, being as beautiful as the statue to General Washington which rests under the dome of the Capitol, and which is considered the most famous work in marble in this country. The statue is by Houdon, and attracts the attention of even the most casual visitor. Within the Capitol Square is an equestrian statue to General Washington, surrounded by famous Virginians. Not far away is a bronze figure of Stonewall Jackson, erected by the gentlemen of England who admired his military genius. On the other side of the Washington Monument, in a pavilion, stands a figure in white marble to Henry Clay, while near it is the old bell tower, an armory of earlier days, when the city maintained its own military force, which acted as police. At the far end of the park is the Governor's Mansion, and next to it is a building known as the State Library, in which is a perfect wealth of Colonial treasures, such as manuscripts, paintings of the Governors of the State, and rare prints full of interest to students of history.

**White House.**  
Far out on the hill that overlooks the valley stands the White House of the Confederacy. Here lived President Davis during the trying years of the Civil War. The building simple but classical, is now used as a museum for Confederate relics, and within its walls is the most valuable collection that the South possesses. On the yard behind the house rests the shaft of the Virginia, known as the Ironclad Merrimack,

which, in its battle with the Monitor in Hampton Roads, revolutionized modern naval warfare. Near the White House, but a single block away, is the Valentine Museum, which is open to visitors, and is well worthy of notice. Just beyond stands the ancient residence of Chief Justice Marshall, on the street named in his honor. The building is now owned by the city. On the lot on one corner of which it stands is now being erected the magnificent new High School of Richmond.

On Church Hill, almost across the way from St. John's Church, is a magnificent residence set in a wooded park, known as the Van Lew house. It was here that Federal prisoners who escaped from Libby Prison were harbored by Miss Battle Van Lew, a Northern sympathizer, who afterward became postmistress at Richmond through the friendship of General Grant. Libby Prison was situated just below the Van Lew residence, but during the great Chicago Fair vandals secured possession of the property and removed this historic structure to make a side show on the Midway.

**First Masonic Temple.**  
On Libby Hill there has been erected a simple shaft built of stones furnished by the various States of the Confederacy, and surmounted by the figure of a Confederate soldier. The statue stands on one of the most commanding positions in the city, in view of all those who enter by rail or water. Down in the valley between Church Hill and Capitol Hill, two of the most important of the seven hills upon which the city is built, is the old Masonic Temple, the first building erected in America for Masonic purposes, and now occupied by Randolph Lodge. The building was

erected in 1785, and is still in excellent repair.

**General Lee's Residence.**  
On Franklin Street, just beyond the Capitol Square, is the house occupied by General Robert E. Lee's family during the war, and just now the home of the Virginia Historical Society, where many valuable pamphlets and pictures are kept. On Lower Main Street stands a building known as "The Old Stone House," which was Washington's headquarters, and where Jefferson, Lafayette and a hundred others famous in history were entertained. It is an interesting fact that President Monroe when a boy at school in Richmond, lived in this old stone house. Near Fifth and Main a simple bronze tablet set in a wall marks the site of the old Allen house, where Edgar Allan Poe lived, and in which he wrote "The Raven." This building was torn down within the last fifteen years to give way for the march of industrial improvement. Driving westward through the fashionable portion of Richmond, one reaches Monument Avenue, so called on account of the monuments which have been erected there. First is seen the bronze equestrian statue to General J. E. B. Stuart, the dashing Confederate cavalryman who was killed near Yellow Tavern, nine miles from Richmond. The next is the magnificent equestrian statue to General Robert E. Lee, who, sitting on the war-horse Traveller, looks toward the Southland which he loved so well. Still further on is the monument to President Jefferson Davis, and still further there will shortly be erected an equestrian statue to General Fitzhugh Lee. It is worthy of note that all four of these great Confederates held commissions

in the United States Army, and that General Fitzhugh Lee began his career as lieutenant in the United States Army and ended it as a major-general in the same service.

**City of the Dead.**  
One of the most interesting spots around Richmond is the beautiful burying ground known as Hollywood, one of the most picturesque homes of the dead in this country. With its beautiful trees, its wide and magnificent lawns and with the river forever singing as it ripples over the rocks beneath the overhanging cliffs, the spot seems almost an ideal one for the repose of the dead. Here are buried many Confederates, and one of the most impressive monuments in and around Richmond marks their resting place. It is a simple pyramid of gray stone, over which Virginia creeper and trumpet flower have grown.

**Old Churches.**  
There remains but to say a word about one or two of the churches of Richmond other than St. John's, which was the first church built in Richmond. The second church was Monumental, built in 1814 on the site of the old theatre, where in 1811 one of the most fearful conflagrations that this city has ever known took place. It was a winter's night, when the theatre was filled with the beauty and fashion of the town, when a fire broke out, and in the panic which followed sixty-five people lost their lives, among them being the Governor of Virginia. So great an impression did this have upon the people of the city that the location was purchased by the Episcopalians, and a very handsome church edifice was erected, on the portico of which rests a marble

monument upon whose four sides are inscribed the names of those who perished in the fire.

The third church built in Richmond was St. James Episcopal. It was at this church that the funeral services of General J. E. B. Stuart were held. The fourth church that was built in Richmond—and it is of interest to note that all of these churches are offshoots of old St. John's—was St. Paul's. The corner-stone of St. Paul's was laid October 10, 1843, by Bishop Johns, the fourth Bishop of Virginia, and the building has as its prototype the Lantern of Demosthenes. Very many distinguished clergymen have been rectors of this church, including many bishops, and no church within Virginia has been more closely identified with the history of the city since its erection.

**Historic Church.**  
It was here that General Robert E. Lee worshipped during the Civil War, and that President Davis and his family attended services. Mr. Davis was confirmed here, and together with Miss Winnie Davis, "The Daughter of the Confederacy," received his first communion, and two months later, while sitting in his pew, received notice from an orderly that the last hopes of the Confederacy had fallen. General Lee being about to evacuate his lines at Petersburg, which terminated in the surrender at Appomattox.

Near Richmond, within easy driving distance, are a number of battlefields, connected almost uninterruptedly by fortifications, while further away, in easy distance by train, battlefields, ancient churches, historic colonial estates, ancient universities and colleges, and all manner of points of historic interest may be visited. Richmond may be said in truth and in fact to be the very center of historic interest of America.

The more modern structures that have no particular historic interest will speak for themselves. Richmond College is the leading educational institution, but plans for a great university, to be known as the University of Richmond, are being developed. The City Hall was described recently by a noted traveler from abroad as the handsomest granite building of its sort he had ever seen. The magnificent new Cathedral of the Sacred Heart is one of the famous ornaments of the city. There are scores of other imposing buildings, public and private, in which the visitor will be interested.